

# LOADSTAR LETTER



\$2.00 ○ July 1996 ○ Issue #36

**"My 28.8 BPS modem and Novaterm 9.6 are however the newest and best that are available. For text use of the Internet, there is not another computer platform that can match my system's capabilities."**

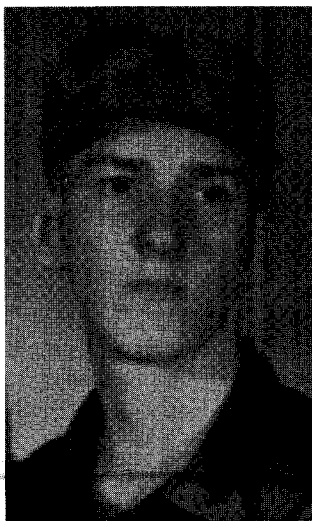
## Commie Killers Abound?

Commodore users are people, too. People kill, and are alleged killers. Not surprisingly, plenty of criminals have used the 12-15 million C-64s which have probably touched 60 million hands in trade. According to LOADSTAR's Washington DC source, Bernard Sussman, Timothy McVeigh, accused Oklahoma City Bomber, made a little money using his C-64 at one time. He's pictured here from his 1988 yearbook of the U.S. Army Infantry Training Center in Fort Benning, Ga. McVeigh is charged with constructing a two-ton bomb of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil that was detonated April 19 in front of the

Oklahoma City, Okla., federal building, the deadliest act of terrorism U.S. history.

George Trepal, alias The Mensa Murderer, was another commodore user who went postal. You can read about is antics in *Poison Mind* by Jeffrey Good and Susan Goreck. Morrow, \$22.

October 1988, in the small central Florida town of Alturas, a 41-year-old waitress named Peggy Carr succumbed to symptoms doctors were unable to explain. Her feet burned, her hair started falling out, she couldn't speak or open her eyes. Within



days she lapsed into a coma from which she would never awaken. Her son and stepson, both healthy teen-agers, and

*(Continued on page 3)*

## NovaTerm 9.6 Review

by John Elliott. I obtained the earlier version of Novaterm when I bought from PPI a 28.8 bps modem for my c64. I already had the Swiftlink interface cartridge which would let me use the faster modem with my computer, but did not have software that would work at that speed over phone lines. Flow Control Novaterm permits control of speed from 300 to 34,400 bps (the Swiftlink speed). Once modem speed passes 9,600, the command bar disappears so that incoming text can be handled more easily.

My screen was filling up so quickly with text at the faster speed that it became illegible due to over printing. Nick reminded me to use the flow control switch in the menu. When this automatic adjustment to my c64 speed took place, everything was readable.

Screen color, text fonts and line length are menu adjustable for ANSI (Commodore color bulletin boards with graphics), and the more standard VT 102 40 and 80 column screens.

A buffer is created which can act as an intermediary between the disk drive and the modem. Files can be sent from the drive or computer to the buffer before going on line so that the speed advantage of the

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Reduce Computer Eye Strain

Whenever my wife catches me computing in the dark, she tells me to turn on the lights. She claims that I need the light or I'll strain my eyes. I never understood this concept. The only time my eyes feel tired is during allergy season. So I tell her, "Honey, the monitor is a light.

Ambient light only fights against the monitor."

She throws up her hands and tells me I should know better. Well now I have vindication. I was led to the following URL by chance, and found a wealth of information. Internet surfers might want to

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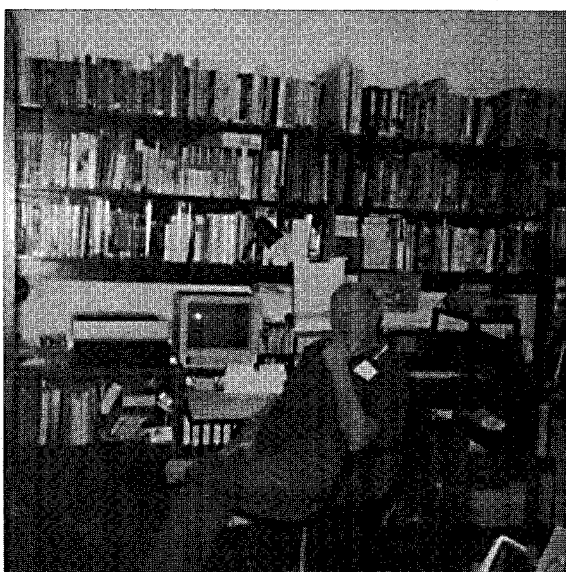
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## Wayne Worlie: Reader Of The Month

Wayne Worlie was born 2-27-27 in South Dakota. Now he's a retired rail worker (since 1981) living in Miles City, Montana. In 1983 his son asked him, "Dad, why don't you have a personal computer?" Wayne responded, "What would I want with one of those? Punch in 2+2 and get 4?" His son went ahead and purchased a C-64 for Wayne on the Christmas of 1983. Wayne begrudgingly accepted the gift, and struggled with it until February 27, 1984, when again his son dropped hardware on his lap. This time it was a 1571 disk drive. At this, Wayne said, "now we're cooking!"

Computing became loads easier for him and he became an avid computerist. He now owns every LOADSTAR there ever was, and a good portion of most C-64 titles ever published.

Send your photo and bio to LS Letter Reader of the month: 606 Common Street, Shreveport, Louisiana 71101



Here are the most common posts found in comp.sys.cbm according to a few of its readers.

From:  
jamesch@ix.netcom.com (Chris)

I can't get Such'n Such program to work. What's wrong with it?

(notice absolutely no info as to what the problem is or what type of system it's running on)

Another favorite...

Somebody@some where.else wrote

> Can someone please tell me what POKE I need to change the background color?

Well, the background is controlled by the VIC chip. it is a complicated piece of equipment that will take the digital data from the computer and convert it to a video signal. Now the functions off all the registers are such ....

<SNIP>

...And that's everything you wanted to know about the VIC. I sure hope that helps. Any more questions, just ask.

>Yes, I have one question. What is the POKE for changing the background color?

## A Few Computer Rip-offs



When you think of *rip-off*, you don't usually think of computer services. After all, computers are a sterile, white-glove field. The

only computer criminals are hackers, right? In 1984 I sent off \$21 of my church's money to a Commodore Software Club and they flew south with the cash. But that falls under the category of mail order rip-offs, not necessarily computer rip-offs.

*Computer rip-offs* are a different animal in my mind. To me a computer rip-off is a scheme where a company charges you unnecessarily and blames it on *computer processing*. The *fee* was invented to squeeze more money out of unsuspecting customers. I often mentally replace *fee* with "*because you'll pay it if we call it that.*" Mr. Jones, on top of your \$40.00 phone bill, we just billed you for that newfangled touch tone thingy *because we know you'll pay it if we call it that.*

We've all seen that commercial where Nick and Rob will find your lost family

members and friends for \$39.95 + \$10.00 *processing fee* if you call their 800 number. The service is legitimate, but why charge an additional \$10 processing when your entire business is processing? Why not just charge people \$49.95. heck, call a spade a spade and say \$50.00! *Because we know you'll pay it if we call it processing!*

How about a toner cartridge packed with a new printer that's only a third full, ensuring a \$100 refill.

For months now Judi's laser printer had been warning, "*drum near end*" until finally last week it refused to operate.

(Continued on page 4)

## Eyestrain Continued...

(Continued from page 1)

visit  
[http://www.inforamp.net/~poynton/notes/reducing\\_eyestrain/index.html](http://www.inforamp.net/~poynton/notes/reducing_eyestrain/index.html)

Charles A. Poynton does an authoritative job of explaining eye strain, and tells in detail how to prevent it in a few easy steps. He is a Fellow of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers. He participates in several SMPTE standards committees, and in 1994 was

awarded the Society's David Sarnoff Gold Medal for work to integrate video and computing technology.

He states that our computing environment should minimize stress, and he gives these guidelines with the monitor turned off:

- Minimize reflections
- Control ambient light
- Establish a suitable surrounding
- Establishing a comfortable viewing distance.

To test your screen for annoying reflections, turn off your monitor. Sit in your normal viewing position and inspect the dark screen for reflections. Try to arrange your environment so that you can see no intense light sources reflected from your screen. If you can't move the furniture, block your (reflected) view of the offending object with dark cardboard baffles.

There is much *much* more information at the site. Check it out! ☐

## Killers Continued...

(Continued from page 1)

her 2-year-old granddaughter suffered from similar symptoms.

Medical examiners traced the illness to a rare element, *thallium*, banned in the US since 1972. It had been planted in an eight-pack of Coca-Cola Naturally the police first suspected Peggy's husband, Pyc Carr, who was having an affair at the time, and was rumored to have taken out large insurance policies on Peggy and their sons.

But when detectives interviewed George Trepal, the Carr's neighbor, Trepal was not only unsympathetic over the demise of his neighbor, but expressed lingering anger over their loud music and unruly behavior.

When asked by policemen why anyone would want to poison the Carr family, Trepal answered, "To get them to move," parroting an anonymous letter the Carrs had received months earlier: "Move out of Florida forever or else you all die."

George Trepal may have been a high-IQ computer specialist, but he talked too much. I did a search for his name on Usenet and an Amiga program popped up. I couldn't find any C-64 programs written by him, but I did find that he had a past conviction for manufacturing illegal drugs. He fit the psychological profile of a poisoner (passive, avoiding direct confrontation), but was too smart to leave any direct evidence of his crime. In the end he was brought to justice.

Now the only question is did *OJ* ever use a C-64? ☐

## Novaterm Continued...

(Continued from page 1)

non-mechanical virtual drive can be used. Both reads (one line at a time) and up and downloads can take place between the modem and buffer as well as between drive and modem. Up and downloads require error checking. With Novaterm I can select among kermit, z modem and y modem. Your destination must also use the same error checking method for you to use the checking protocol available on your menu.

These features can be controlled while on line either by calling the memory resident help menu or by temporarily leaving the terminal mode to adjust parameters, work with your drives or use the text editor. Novaterm 9.6

The new Novaterm retains the above features, enhances some, and adds a suite of additional facilities.

I have used kermit and z modem to download large files. Z modem is many times faster. Y modem can now be used for

both up and downloading. Since it allows "streaming" rather than sending in chunks of data, there is a speed advantage. Although I would like to use y modem, my shell provider does not offer that feature.

The new disk and buffer modes both offer a number of additional features. I can with a menu system do batch saves and deletes of disk files from either mode.

I can also do uudecode/uucodes from either mode.

(Continued on page 5)

From "Bruce R. McFarling"  
<ecbm@cc.newcastle.edu.au>  
Organization  
Department of  
Economics,  
University of  
Newcastle

>I would say also,  
"WHAT IS THE  
STATUS OF SLIP  
FOR THE 64" is up  
there

Another category  
is needed for 'Is  
there a WWW  
Browser for the  
C64" and "How do  
I hook up an IDE  
drive to my C64".

They are  
clockwork  
questions: if it  
has been long enough  
since it was asked,  
you just know its  
going to come up  
again. Another  
clockwork  
question is "Can I  
run a C64 off of  
[12/6/5] volts  
without  
[damaging/burning  
down/frying] my  
[car/house/C64]?  
It came up  
recently, it  
probably won't  
come up for a little  
while yet.

... but like the  
shark in Jaws, you  
know its just biding  
its time.

From: Paul Allen  
Panks  
pap@dana.ucc.na  
u.edu  
Northern Arizona  
University

1) For sale posts  
(mostly people  
wanting to buy a  
C64 or 128)

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a program won't  
load or run, but no  
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software name  
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RAMPART  
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ADV OCP ART  
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COMPUTER EYES  
PRINTMASTER  
NEWSROOM  
GEOWRITE  
DOODLE

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**A Thumbs up  
From the  
Grand Motor**

## Rip-offs continued...

(Continued from page 2)

Judi paid \$200.00 to replace the drum. This *expired* drum worked *fine* all the way until the last page. It says in the manual that the original drum would print 3000 pages, which is about right, but the replacement would print 30,000 pages. Anyone feeling paranoid with me? Here we have a working computer device that refuses to work until the manufacturer gets another \$200. I would wager that the replacement was the same as the original except that the replacement either had no counter or was set for 30,000 before it refuses to work.

I have to work with service bureaus (people who own \$50,000 printers) in order to print photographic quality images from my work. My pet fee? "Raster Image Processing," which is affectionately termed the RIP in the industry. Before a service bureau can print my images on a color laser or a dye sub printer, they first *rasterize* it (show it on a TV) and *that* costs \$14.00 locally. I think *RIP-off* and *fee* go hand in hand. I have to pass this fee on to my customers. I call it a "per digital pose fee" because I know they'll pay it

if I call it that.

Oh yeah, I forgot to mention that a RIP program sells for "only \$2995.00." A legitimate cost is being passed onto me — perpetually mind you, but granted, a cost once incurred.

I just wish people would *earn* their killing like they used to in the good old days instead of blaming computers. Meanwhile I pay \$X.95 per month for an array of ethereal services, and the occasional labor fee from Ma Bell: a \$22.95 "connection fee" for an operator to cursor over and press RETURN. ☐

## Centsible Systems Grand Re-opening!


We have outgrown our present facility and will be moving to a much larger location as of June 1, 1996. I would personally like to thank Commodore users from all over the country for contributing to the success and growth of Centsible Systems.

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## Comp.sys.cbm Q&A :HP Printers with GEOS?

**David Matheson wrote:** I have been looking at printers lately and have found a good deal on some HP desk jets. Are these printers compatible with GEOS? Are there drivers for them out there? Do they have Epson emulation modes? I need to know before I buy one.

**Bo answered:** As far as I know, the answer is no, no, and no. I have a HP Deskjet 540 I use on the damn PeeSee I own, and have been trying for ages

to get it to work with my 128D. Not geoCable, not my printer interface-- nothing has made it go. - Bo

**David Tuomi responded:** I own an HP500 that I use with my 64/128. I have an Epson emulation cartridge that HP made a few years back. It seems to work fine with a Super Graphics Gold interface. But somehow an HP running an Epson emulation, with a interface card that is running a

Commodore emulation, seems rather inefficient. It works fine, though, and is certainly a tribute to the ruggedness of the emulations in place within these two devices.

**Jeff states:** HP printers use a language which has very powerful drawing commands like postscript. When a printer emulates, it's no big deal technically its "native" mode is just another emulation or protocol. ☐

3) People asking for information on CMD's newest products

4) Commentary about programming issues

5) Commentary about Commodore computers

6) Complaints about treatment by non-commodore people to commodore people at swap meets, thrift stores, etc.

7) Complaints about the "slow" 1571 or 1581 without jiffy DOS

8) Questions about software

9) Knocks on the "old" commodore for mismanagement.

10) Complaints about little or on Plus/4, 16, vic-20, pet or Amiga coverage.

11) Questions about copy protection

12) Questions about copyright laws

13) Humorous stories about people dreams as they relate to the commodore community

14) Future of publications like LOADSTAR and Diehard

15) Questions about ACE, Novaterm, etc.

16) Commentary and debates about why the commodore is such a great machine

## Novaterm continued...

(Continued from page 3)

This means that I can perform these operations on files which are either in the buffer or drives. Uuencode/decode is an important process on the net. It converts binary files into text for easy sending. All computers can receive them. Decoding programs specific to each platform convert them to their original image (gif etc.) or text form. This technique makes it possible to also send images or preformatted text by e-mail. I own two earlier uuencoders (Fuzzy Fox's and Ace's) neither of which could I get to work. Novaterm 9.6's version not only works for me, but also encodes for sending.

Like the Big Blue Reader, Novaterm 9.6 converts between ASCII, Pet ASCII, and standard Commodore screen mode and saves the result. The text editor directly reads whatever has been downloaded or captured. While it lacks many word processor features, it can read and operate on files many times larger than what can be worked with by any Commodore word processor. Since many text files downloaded from the Net are over 100 blocks, this feature is very important, especially with a c64. It's about time!

I finally have a program besides GEOS that will use my PPI real time clock (and all other available Commodore clocks). Automatically on loading I can see in the top margin both the time of day and elapsed time. Data and time stamping does not

take place.

Novaterm 9.6 can be configured to all Commodore compatible modems from 300 BPS up, and to all interfaces including CMD's SwiftLink for the faster modems.

Most amazing to me was what Nick had done to his buffer. As before, either a section of computer memory or a ram expansion unit can be designated as the buffer. If only computer memory is used, only 8k is available. For larger files, the workaround is that autosaves take place between to disk as the buffer fills. Since my REU has 512k, I have turned this feature off. The buffer is now treated as a real drive with its own ability to load from and save to disk. Earlier Novaterm versions required that a disk copy module be loaded to accomplish

(Continued on page 6)

17) Commentary about "non-commodore machines".

18) An occasional knock on Bill Gates and Microsoft in ppl's sig files.

19) Problems getting old disks to load or save

20) Attempting to transfer files from a PC to the commodore and a 1541

21) Questions about adventure game writing

22) Questions about CP/M or another operating system such as GEOS

23) Questions about old magazines or the people who helped work on them (pre-Commodore World)

24) Questions about what's acceptable in the public domain and what's still available commercially

25) Questions about various emulators concerning the commodores


26) Questions about .D64 images

27) Questions about all-time favorite games

28) Concern about flaky power supplies

29) Concern about flaky computers or keyboards

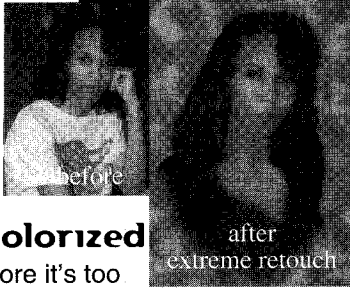
30) Questions about how to change the device number in the



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## Novaterm 9.6 Review

(Continued from page 5)  
those tasks.

I now also have alternate buffer sources. GEORAM and BBGRAM were designed to work only with GEOS. They will also work as ram memory for non GEOS functions if attached to the REU port of a RamLink. Nick has configured Novaterm so that it can use either cartridge as buffer memory. My storage capacity would jump to 2 megs and be nonvolatile if I were to use my BBGRAM instead of my 1750 REU. This week I bought a 128D. Novaterm will also use its extra 64k video memory as a buffer.

Since Novaterm does not reinitialize the buffer on reloading, the buffer stays intact if Novaterm is left, a separate program is run, and Novaterm is reloaded. This can all happen while you are still on line. As an experiment, I have downloaded a gif to disk, left Novaterm, run a gif decoder, viewed the gif and returned to Novaterm without interrupting my on line session. Since with JiffyDOS it loads from my 1581 in about 20 seconds, the small gifs can be captured, viewed and the user can continue working on the Net in less than five minutes. Netscape 1.0, Minuet and PC Lynx all initially used this approach to handle gif viewing. An external gif viewer was called whenever an image file was met.

During this entire process, whatever I had placed in the buffer remained. With a BBU or BBGRAM, the buffer would remain intact whether the computer was on or off.

With my JiffyDOS equipped 1581, I am in terminal mode with Novaterm in 20 seconds. When I take the time to learn its scripting language, one key stroke will then dial my shell provider, access my mail, and Telnet to my browser provider. For the moment, I have assigned key commands and pass words to my function keys, so that

typing is kept to a minimum.

Although much of my e-mail is stored in my file area of my shell, I capture to buffer whatever I want to later edit or print out. If while on the Web with Lynx I come across an image or text file I wish to download, I can expect to take up to 2 seconds for each k. A 120 k image file is not uncommon, and will take me four minutes to place in my buffer. At the best time of day, my PC at work would match this speed.

My browser provider tells me they are using for those of us who Telnet in, something faster than a T1 line (which is faster than any modem). I have a 28.8 BPS modem from PPI that will also let me use GEOFax. My SwiftLink works at 38.4 BPS. The time to go from power on to terminal mode with JiffyDOS and Novaterm is less than the time it takes my PC to scroll its configuration information across the screen. While cursor speed seems to be affected by how good a day my server is having, and how heavy the traffic is, downloading and moving among Web links seems to be equally fast at all times of the day, no matter how heavy the traffic.

My equipment is state of the art. I bought my 1990 Swiftlink from Doctor Evil originally to help null modem

transfers. My REU is the same age. My 28.8 BPS modem and Novaterm 9.6 are however the newest and best that are available. For text use of the Internet, there is not another computer platform that can match my system's capabilities.

Even when Commodore users have access to a fully functioning slip and graphical browser, we will need Novaterm 9.6 to make the connections and "remember" what we have found. By the way: My more experienced 128 friends tell me they are most excited by the support of the fast mode 80 column screen in terminal mode.

Novaterm 9.6 is available on either 1541 or 1581 disk for US\$29.95. There is also a 90 page user's manual. Send check or money order to:

Nick Rossi  
10002 Aurora Ave. N. #3353  
Seattle WA 98133  
USA

E-mail Nick at  
voyager@eskimo.com My 28.8 BPS modem (or a 14.4 one), can be bought quite reasonably from Peter Fiset of PPI. E-mail Peter at fiset@easyweb.com Or 1-800-easyweb ☐

internal 1571  
of the 128D.

31) Discussion about why they never made a 64D or produced the 65.

32) Questions about word processors, or other productivity software

33) Questions about the longevity of disks

34) FAQs, FYIs, or other pertinent information

35) Ways to extend the life of the 64, 128, or amiga

36) Getting more colors out of a 64 or 128

37) Complaints about the plus/4's keyboard layout and lack of joysticks or software

38) Questions about ML programming

39) Questions about compilers

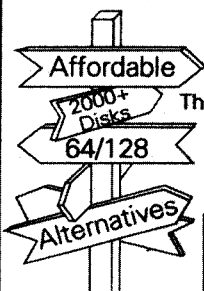
40) Questions about BASIC

Regards,

Paul Allen Panks ☐

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